

SAINT GEORGE.

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(The Society of the Rose.)

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JOHN RUSKIN.

HE held the torch aloft of noble aim,
In Art, in Life, when Art and Life lay bound,
And coal, and iron, and steam ruled English ground,
And Labour blind beneath the smoke and flame
Of greed was driven—Beauty but a name.
Hope from the mountains brought he, hope new found,
New birth in Art he heralded and crowned,
And laid at Nature's shrine truth's utmost claim.

He from the storied past, as from a well,
Drew water bright, to sparkle in the sun
Of living hopes and fears, or in the glass
Of Art saw beauty's face, and with her shell
Close to his ear held sweet discourse and won
World-listeners, grieving now that voice should pass.
Walter Crane.

January 22nd, 1900.

RUSKIN'S NATURE OF GOTHIC AND ITS RELATION TO MODERN HANDICRAFTS.*

By Chas. Holme. Editor of *The Studio*.



FTER detailing, in *The Stones of Venice*, the characteristics of Byzantine architecture, Mr. Ruskin as a preamble to the consideration of the Venetian style introduces his readers to Gothic architecture in a chapter, which, especially in its relation to modern work, is of vital and universal interest. In this chapter the author formulates certain principles which he conceives to be those which especially distinguish Gothic from the styles preceding it. His remarks are not restricted to any one variety of Gothic, but are of a general nature and apply to all varieties. The main portion of his observations is devoted to what he calls the Mental Expression of Gothic, his definition of the Material Form being confined to comparatively small limits. It is to the earlier and more important section of the chapter that I shall now limit my remarks, and, more especially, to its consideration in relation to Modern Art, to the Art which most concerns those whose work it is to render their craftsmanship acceptable, not only in its fulfilment of modern necessities, but also as expressive of advanced civilization and of high ethical thought. We are, at the present time, slowly emerging from a condition of mind in relation to certain artistic matters which is distressingly immature if not absolutely false. The faculties of our craftsmen newly awakened, it may be, to the external beauty of ancient Art have, without consideration of its true significance, hastened to copy and to alter it without regard to the great quality of Fitness; and the result has been a distortion and misplacement of ideas often bordering upon the grotesque. The great question, What is Art? has again and again been considered by critics, and much has been written thereon of more or less questionable value. That Art is, as it were, a varied species of Language by which the

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thoughts and aspirations of mankind may find outward expression is too often ignored. The putting on of paint with a brush, the chipping of stone, the fashioning of clay and the carving of wood are not in themselves Arts any more than speech is Elocution, sound, Music, or writing, Literature; they are Arts only when they exhibit a power of intellectual expression, when they become the skilful exponents of great thoughts and great principles. This is so evident that it would seem almost unnecessary to refer to it; but when we think about Art, our thoughts are so elusive, and stray away so constantly, that it is important to keep this essential fact ever before us. It is because of our indifference or forgetfulness that we are constantly inclined to praise certain paintings, buildings, decorations and objects in which Art is supposed to have found a place, when in reality we ought unreservedly to condemn them. It is also because of this indifference or forgetfulness that much has been perpetrated in the name of Art in this nineteenth century that must ever somewhat detract from its fair fame. Architecture is one of the noblest of Arts and it is capable of expressing the highest thoughts and the truest morality; but when we examine the buildings around us how often do we find them failing not only in the commonest necessities of their existence but absolutely flaunting deceitful artifice and pretentious sham? Such buildings speak a language too—a language which, if verbally expressed, would condemn those who utter it to the contempt of all right-minded people.

Where can we find keys to unlock the mysteries of Art? Where must we seek for the true path that will lead us to the goal of our aspirations? Our greatest help to that end will be found in the cultivation of a spirit of enquiry, in which we shall not permit ourselves to accept matters as they are without a rigorous investigation of their merits and demerits. It is by constant analysis that good judgment can finally be formed. But aid to a right understanding may also be obtained by the careful perusal of the thoughts of others; and, of all writers, John Ruskin will probably

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help us the most. It may be that sometimes we are not able to agree with his premises; it may be that his arguments fail occasionally to convince us, and that his conclusions are not always in accordance with our own—but in spite of this, much, very much, that he has written will appeal to our judgment and will find a resting place in our minds. And, above all, he will teach us how to think, how to analyze the questions of Art, and will generally enable us to differentiate between the true and the false. This, it always seems to me, is one of Ruskin's greatest virtues. And another one is that he, more than any other writer, has endowed Art with a Humanism which is one of its chief characteristics, and to which a great importance ought always to be attached.

In *The Nature of Gothic*, this essential habit of analysis and this sense of Humanism in Art are both fully expressed. Thus, the moral elements of Gothic are methodically stated by the author to consist of Savageness, Changefulness, Naturalism, Grotesqueness, Rigidity and Redundance. Upon each one of these qualities an essay is compiled which, whatever may be thought about its merits as an exposition of the principles of Gothic, is calculated to do more for the making of good Art to-day and for the advance of a right understanding as to true principles than the whole life-work of many another art-teacher. It is not my purpose to consider his six moral elements in detail. I prefer, considering the limitations of this paper, to select a few of the facts referred to by him in order that I may endeavour to show how intimately they may be applied to the betterment of our modern craftsmanship.

And, first of all, we will speak of Servile Ornament. Servile Ornament, Mr. Ruskin defines to be that "in which the execution or power of the inferior workman is entirely subjected to the intellect of the higher." It is to be found essentially in Greek, Ninevite and Egyptian work. "The Greek master-workman was far advanced in knowledge and power above the Assyrian or Egyptian. Neither he nor those for whom he worked could endure the appearance of imperfection in anything; and, therefore,

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what ornament he appointed to be done by those beneath him was composed of mere geometrical forms—balls, ridges, and perfectly symmetrical foliage—which could be executed with absolute precision by line and rule, and were as perfect in their way, when completed, as his own figure sculpture. The Assyrian and Egyptian, on the contrary, less cognisant of accurate form in anything, were content to allow their figure sculpture to be executed by inferior workmen, but lowered the method of its treatment to a standard which every workman could reach, and then trained him by discipline so rigid that there was no chance of his falling beneath the standard appointed. The Greek gave to the lower workman no subject which he could not perfectly execute. The Assyrian gave him subjects which he could only execute imperfectly but fixed a legal standard for his imperfection. The workman was, in both systems, a slave."

Did it ever strike you to what a great extent slavery exists in the Ornament of to-day? Why, we are still living in some measure under the control of the Greek master-workman, and to even a larger degree under the debased sway of the chiefs of the French and Italian Renaissance. What is the character of the studies of Ornament placed before pupils in ninety-nine out of every hundred art schools in this country? Whether they be Elementary Freehand, Second-Grade Freehand or Casts for light and shade drawing they are all alike copies from the Antique or the Renaissance. The first elements in freehand work should be matters connected with the control of the pencil and brush, purely technical matters, which should enable the student to understand the management of his tools in order to get from them the greatest possible results they are capable of producing. And yet, there is probably not one per cent. of the students who, when they leave their Art Schools, know how to handle their brushes so as to obtain from them even a fairly satisfactory record. What the Japanese call "the power of the brush" is an unknown quantity with them. In fact, they are not taught to use the

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brush until they have dulled the delicacy of their sense of touch with a series of hard-point studies—studies by which they are fallaciously supposed to learn the principles of Ornament! What true Ornament is, and how it can legitimately be employed, is much too extensive a subject to engage our attention here. But I want to say, and to say it with all the emphasis I can, that the patterns from the Antique and the Renaissance which our students are taught to copy are, in the effect they have upon the training of the mind, not only useless for inculcating true principles, they are *absolute evils* which tend to retard and stultify all true progress.

No wonder that when the young craftsman comes to apply the lessons he has learned in the Government School to his own trade, he confines his attention to repeating the same old forms upon cornice, or panel, or wall-surface. He has been taught that such details of decoration are the only true Art, the *ne plus ultra* of decorative refinement; and that the greatest craftsman is he who can most perfectly imitate them in mechanical perfection of outline and proportion. Of the great principles of Ornament and Decoration he has been taught next to nothing. The comparison of styles and the lessons to be derived therefrom are ignored by him. Instead of great principles to guide him in the pursuit of his profession he has been shown only one or two little tricks which seem to stick to him and remain with him throughout his career. The faculty of designing has been killed within him, if it ever existed. As Ruskin says: "You can teach a man to draw a straight line, and to cut one; to strike a curved line, and to carve it; and to copy and carve any number of given lines or forms, with admirable speed and perfect precision; and you find his work perfect of its kind: but if you ask him to think about any of those forms, to consider if he cannot find any better in his own head, he stops." And again, "You must either make a tool of the creature or a man of him. You cannot make both. Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and perfect in all their actions. If you will have that precision out of them, and

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make their fingers measure degrees like cog-wheels, and their arms strike curves like compasses, you must unhumanize them. All the energy of their spirits must be given to make cogs and compasses of themselves." "On the other hand if you will make a man of the working creature, you cannot make a tool. Let him but begin to imagine, to think, to try to do anything worth doing; and the engine-turned precision is lost at once. Out come all his roughness, all his dulness, all his incapability; shame upon shame, failure upon failure, pause after pause; but out comes the whole majesty of him also; and we know the height of it only when we see the clouds settling upon him."

One of the great lessons we may learn from the study of Gothic architecture is the freedom which the mason enjoyed in determining the character of the details intrusted to his care. In gargoyles, capitols, corbels, and finials, the servility of Grecian detail does not enter—the craftsman determined in his own savage way, within certain limitations, the form of expression he should give to his ornament; and variety and freedom of workmanship were in his eyes a greater merit than a purely mechanical perfection of finish.

The mission of Art is to elevate the intelligence and gratify its longings. Machine-made Art, however mechanically perfect it may be, can never do this in any important degree. Better the design be savage in idea and execution so long as it expresses the humanity of the worker than microscopically perfect in finish and soulless in its conception.

What can be done by us to further the cause of true Art? Ruskin answers the question in asking us to observe three broad and simple rules:

1. Never encourage the manufacture of any article not absolutely necessary in the production of which *Invention* has no share.
2. Never demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end.
3. Never encourage imitation, or copying of any kind, except for the sake of preserving records of great works.

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We will endeavour to apply these rules to familiar instances. One of the most striking examples to come under rule 1 is the character and nature of modern gem-jewellery—the diamond stars and crescents, pins and brooches of modern fashion. They cry aloud to all beholders “There is nothing of Art about us. We represent only so much wealth, so much love of display, so much mechanical labour of the diamond seeker and the diamond cutter—riches without refinement, showiness without artistic merit.” Compare with such objects the masterpieces of the best periods of Florentine goldsmiths’ work, the early Spanish gold and enamelled ornaments or even the silver and diamond jewellery of Denmark and Norway. The atrocious vulgarity of the modern work is at once apparent. There is no human quality about it. Who cares to know the names of the Kaffirs who found the stones, the Dutchmen who cut them, or the Englishman who set them in their commonplace mounts? And yet, these are, *par excellence*, articles “not absolutely necessary”—articles which should not be produced unless “invention”—the spirit of Art, the highest quality of the craftsman—be bestowed upon them. Here, in this great city of Birmingham, one of the most advanced and cultured centres of the Empire, is the home of the jewellery trade, and therefore the locality in which should be gathered together all those designers and craftsmen whose busy brains and deft fingers would enable them to produce the most artistic outcome of the working of gold and silver and precious stones—the Ghibertis, the Donatellos, the Cellinis of England. And yet when we visit the Art Exhibitions of the Continent, where, more frequently than in England, jewellery and other decorative objects are displayed, we look in vain for any beautiful goldsmiths’ work by English hands. There French and the Belgian craftsmen exhibit works in jewellery, and their productions are sought after and purchased in every capital in Europe. Yet, a certain movement is visible in this country. A few of our artists are endeavouring to infuse a new and better spirit into the jeweller’s Art, and may all honour and success attend

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them in their worthy efforts. But the effort is at present a tentative rather than a serious one, and more, much more, spirit must be infused into the work if it is to be of national and material benefit.

As an illustration of the application of Rule 2, the silversmith's and metal-worker's crafts may be cited. Ruskin advises us never to "demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end." Now it would almost appear that the first essential in the eyes of the manufacturer of silver-plate, and of the public who buy his wares, is that his productions should possess a mechanically perfect finish. Is the salver an object that has been carefully and laboriously hammered into shape and the pattern chased upon it by hand? or is it moulded into form and decorated by a press and a steel die? No matter how the work be executed, the completed objects are burnished and finished in such a manner as to make it difficult to distinguish one from the other. Every mark of the hammer, every trace of human handicraft is obliterated in the vain effort to obtain what is thought to be perfection in finish. How much more artistic in general aspect is the rough repoussé or chased brass tray of the Damascus or Tangier workman, with all its limitation of design and imperfection of finish, to the mechanically perfect product of an ordinary Birmingham workshop! Or, to take an example from another trade, how infinitely more satisfactory to the eye is the coarse earthenware of Rhodes with its decoration in blues and greens and reds, running into each other and not always confining themselves within the strict outlines of the pattern, to the Hungarian or British imitation with its mechanical perfection of shape and its correctly drawn and coloured pattern. Why is it that the Eastern objects should appeal so to our artistic sense? Simply because the traces of handiwork are apparent in them; they speak to us of humanity and not of the machine-shop. Their very imperfections, being natural and not sought after, become actual virtues. Let the machine-made object be finished with the neatness and perfection which the best

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machinery process that can be applied to it is capable of. It is right and fitting that it should be. And by no means allow it to imitate the imperfections of hand-work. The imitation Tangier tray, stamped and cut by machinery, would be an object fearful to contemplate, as are the imitation hammer-marked objects one sees now in the shop windows. Machine-made objects and hand-made objects have each a manner of presentment exactly fitted and suited to themselves, and it is not meet that they should strive to imitate each other in any respect. Some efforts are being made by a few enthusiastic craftsmen in this country to give to silver and other metal work a design and finish which shall appeal to the cultivated taste, and it is pleasant to learn that the greatest success has attended their efforts, not only in the ready patronage they have obtained, but also in the successful production of objects, some, at least, of which may rank in artistic quality with the best modern painted canvases.

It may fairly be presumed, from the evidences before us, that in the near future many would-be artists instead of joining the ranks of painters and illustrators, will seek new fields in the various crafts in which to exercise their talents and build up their reputations. There are great chances for them if they will endeavour to master their *métier* in the same thorough manner as did the artists and great master-workers of old.

The third rule we are asked to observe is "Never to encourage imitation or copying of any kind, except for the sake of preserving records of great works." To copy or to imitate is the refuge of the feeble, and it is the bane of our schools of art. That some form of copying is necessary in the earlier stages of drawing is of course evident, but the objects we may copy are not limited to the ordinary curriculum of the art master. The Japanese and Chinese learn how to draw in learning how to write. The formation of their elaborate characters is looked upon in itself, as a fine art. The sense of form, proportion and balance of parts is cultivated, and the boy who knows how to write well has already mas-

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tered the first elements of drawing. I remember an old school-master of mine who held very strong views on this question. He used to laugh at the freehand studies of the common copy-book, and instead of placing work of that nature before his pupils made them draw letters and illuminate texts. Such studies he considered far more useful, and equally effective, in teaching them how to draw. And this much may be said for his views; if a student is able to copy with ease and form in correct proportions, say an elaborate Gothic foliated capital letter, he knows as much as any ordinary "freehand" copy is likely to teach him; and when he has mastered the forms of a dozen different alphabets, or indeed a single one only, he has acquired that which will be of use to him in all sorts of unexpected ways throughout his life. This, moreover, is a sort of copying that is permissible and will aid him to get over the early drudgery of more serious work, without poisoning his mind in favour of any one particular style of design. For, in order that he may take advantage of all that is known upon the question when he comes to carry out and express the forms and subjects that he finds most fitting for the work he has in hand, it is necessary that the student should instruct himself, above all, in the *principles* of design.

The student who has only been taught design by means of a certain number of stereotyped examples, fails to grasp the great morality of his subject and allows his soul to sink into the slavery of imitation. The cry is ever Imitation! Imitation! Imitation! Have you, a landscape painter, studied Nature and tried to depict on canvas the impressions which she has made on your own impressionable mind? Have you, a writer, been able to show vividly to the world the visions and aspirations of your own true self? If so, the discriminating critic may have applauded your work and drawn the attention of others who have joined in a chorus of praise. Then has come along, warily, the imitator. He has copied from you a little trick here, a little touch there, which he esteems to be the vital part of your talent. You know well enough

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how much he has failed to realize the true spirit, and how lacking his imitation has been in those qualities which have given whatever value to your productions they may possess. But the budding young Impressionist painter or Naturalistic writer who has been attracted towards Whistler or Kipling and endeavoured to imitate their mannerisms, will, unfortunately, find an indiscriminating public to applaud, for a time at least, his weak plagiarisms. Imitation is but another form of slavery. It is not possible nor, perhaps, advisable that we should be altogether independent of it, but we must not allow it to take too great a hold upon us. We should remember this, that no great painter, or writer, or decorator, or craftsman, whose name is known to the world and whose work stands in the highest repute, was ever a mere imitator. A master must lead and not follow. Your plagiarists, or imitators, or pirates—call them what you will—must always be regarded as slaves, and their work, in so far as it may pretend to be artistic, of no merit.

But in this chapter on *The Nature of Gothic* there are many other lessons to be learned by us of value to our own work. Mr. Ruskin tells us a good deal about the advantage of Changefulness or Variety in design, of the futility of limiting the orders of Architecture to five, or to any other number, and of the spirit which should underlie all work with pretensions to the artistic, so that we may be able to find in its contemplation a new delight and a new pleasure, and that we may have the power to read the "stones" with the same kind of gratification that we might read the "stanzas" of Milton or Dante. "It is that strange disquietude of the Gothic spirit that is its greatness; that restlessness of the dreaming mind, that wanders hither and thither among the niches, and flickers feverishly around the pinnacles, and frets and fades in labyrinthine knots and shadows along wall and roof, and yet is not satisfied nor shall be satisfied. The Greek could stay in his triglyph furrow, and be at peace; but the work of the Gothic Art is fret-work still, and it can neither rest in nor from its labour, but must

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pass on, sleeplessly, until its love of change shall be pacified for ever in the change that must come alike on them that wake and them that sleep."

Ruskin also tells us about the love of Naturalism displayed in Gothic work—not the vulgar Naturalism that sees only the outside of things, but something also of the underlying spirit—a Naturalism that will discover and try to express the beauty of growth in the plant as well as of form in its individual parts.

It is this higher form of Naturalism that is the very essence of all great Art. The teacher who shall be content to instruct his pupils how to flatten out the flowers and leaves and copy their outlines, and who shall fail to point out to him the "habits" of the plant, the nature of its growth, the pose of its young leaves and buds, the contour of its winding tendrils or branching stems, is dealing only with the "dry bones" of nature.

We realize how important it is in the painting of a portrait that something of the character and spirit of the subject should be displayed in the expression and pose of the individual. We know in the making of a landscape picture how much greater it is to express the freshness of the dewy morning, the mystery of the night, the darkness of the rainy day, or the wildness of the south-westerly gale, than it is to paint all the tiles on the cottage roof or all the bricks in the farm-yard wall. But it has not generally come home to us that when we go to Nature for ideas to enable us to ornament our buildings and furniture, there are qualities higher than those of common form to be studied, and beauties to be discovered and applied, that, when expressed with power and discrimination, will go far towards the improvement of modern decorative Art. It is to the application of such higher expressions that some of the quite modern departures in ornament owe their chief charm, although it may be they are at times misunderstood and misjudged by those who take no thought of the meaning of the things they attempt to criticise.

Many other pertinent suggestions strike us in reading through

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The Nature of Gothic, some of which are of too technical a character to call for attention here; but enough has perhaps been said to show the value and suggestiveness of this remarkable chapter. There is one thing, however, to which I should now like to refer, which appears to me to run through all Mr. Ruskin's writings: It is to the seriousness of Art. It is a mistake to imagine that Art is a mere luxury to be indulged in alone by the wealthy and leisured classes. It is a fallacy to state that Art is not for the poor, that it is outside the pale of the common life of man; or that it is a mere plaything with which to pass an idle hour.

Art is a language which may be expressed in all that we turn our hands to do; and, oftentimes, it is apparent where we fail to recognize it, and where we would least expect it to be.

I remember in the course of a discussion following a paper read some years ago before a Society in London, the question turned upon the artistic quality of certain Japanese coins. A Japanese gentleman, son of one of the most prominent members of the Japanese government, made a few observations. He said that he had listened with the greatest attention to the remarks made by the previous speakers, and was delighted to hear that they considered the coins referred to were so excellent as works of Art, and he felt quite sure that the designer would be surprised and gratified at the compliments which had been paid him. Objects of this kind were produced in Japan without a thought of their being artistic and they were certainly produced without any conscious effort after effect. It seemed perfectly natural that they should be designed as they were and no one regarded them in any sense as efforts of genius. Now, it often seems to me that Art is most welcome when it is most natural, and when it is produced without apparent effort; and that it is, therefore, especially pleasing when found in the simple articles of every day use that custom may have made familiar to all. There is more Art in a common Devonshire earthenware jug, with its coarse running-down glazes, than there is

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in the bedizened and begilt ewer of a china chamber service. There is more Art in an old brass candlestick than there is in many a highly ornate modern lamp. There is more Art in an old oak clothes-chest than there usually is in the carved and polished mahogany side-board. And, finally, there is infinitely more Art in the thatched Sussex cottage, or the half-timbered Shropshire one, than in the stone porticoed and balustraded suburban villa. Art is not ornament, although ornament may be Art. Art is not a question of material; of stone versus wood, of gold versus clay. The commonest things may be artistic in a certain degree, while the most elaborate may lack Art in every degree whatsoever.

The pursuit of Art is a serious one—so serious indeed that few seem to fathom its mysteries. Yet it is a glorious pursuit nevertheless, and one that is indispensable to the higher civilization. It is based essentially upon Truth and to a large extent upon common-sense. It is the hand-maid of Religion; indeed it is often an expression of Religion in itself, inasmuch as some of the greatest of mental and even moral attributes are closely attendant upon it.

We ought to cultivate the love of Art as a duty, and we ought to endeavour not to sin against its *precepts* any more than against the laws of common social morality. If we love it in the right way we shall find it a continual delight and solace. If all our surroundings are wisely chosen, they will speak to us a language of truth and beauty. Even the lowly cottage, furnished only with the simple necessities of life, may, if Art be allowed to come into it, be a source of joy and pleasure to its inmates. Art is for all, and it is the duty of us all to try to understand its true meaning and its true mission. It is a mistake to suppose that there are too many artists in the world. There ought to be artists practising every handicraft; and the principles of Art ought to be taught in our schools along with grammar and arithmetic; for it is in its right understanding that we shall be able to perfect our work and render glorious the labour of our lives.

THE OPEN SECRET.

I DREAMT: and dreaming, saw Humanity
Gathered in a great hall wide as the world,
The roof whereto, of blue and sparkling gold,
Was pillared up with shafts huge as the hills.
All men I ever saw or heard about,
And more, were there, a maze of motley life;
Kings' crowns and purple robes on some, and rags
On mobs that followed them. Great ones I saw,
In various curious garb that signified
Justice, authority; and those to whom
These ministered wore prisoners' weeds, or slaves'.
Others showed forth a boasted call from God
In black broadcloth and snowy linen bands;
By whom the ragged, prisoners, and slaves
Were awed and pacified. All these strange things
I saw expressed in thousand different ways
By folk of every race, and clime, and creed:
Christians and Jews, Turks, Hindoos and Chinese,
Pagans and savages not civilized;
And from these mouths ascended to my ears
The speech of Babel. At which sights and sounds
My wits deserted me, and scattered like
A broken army, fleeing every way.

Beside me, presently, I heard as though
The air itself were sighing; looking round
I saw the folding of an angel's wings,
Come newly out of the no-world of dreams.
To him I cried, "I am all lost, confused,
These countless folk with endless change and speech
Have left my reason. Give me now to know

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The workings, and the end, of this vast whirl."
The angel answering, said, "Be wise, and watch!"

Slowly before my wondering eyes the crowns,
Robes, rags and vestments fell from every man,
And the great host stood habited in red,
Pale red with some, with others, like fierce flames.
*(But here and there I marked a scattered few,
White-robed, from whom there stole a lovely light.)*
Then said the angel, "Thou art taught by this,
That men, unhusked, are one in lust and pride.
Yet more the wise may learn. Watch patiently!"

Slowly the faint and fierce red faded out,
And the great host took on a livery
Of yellow, pale with some, but jaundiced, deep,
Close-fitting as their skins, with multitudes.
(But the white-robed ones changed not, shining still.)
Then said the angel, "Thou are taught by this,
That men are one in envy, avarice.
Yet more the wise may learn. Watch hopefully!"

In yet a little while, and that great host
Stood naked and ashamed. Gazing about,
Seeing their misery, they gnashed their teeth,
And wailed, and wrung their hands. Then a strong wind
Swept down on them, and bore them, like dry chaff,
Beyond the pillars into outer night.
(But the white-robed ones moved not, shining still.)
Then said the angel, "Thou art taught by this,
That those who follow after worldliness
Are lighter in the scales than vanity."

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“And who are these white-shining ones?” I asked.
He answered, “These are they whose souls are clothed
In love and truth; God has appointed these
To shine like stars in heaven for evermore.”

John C. Kenworthy.

RUSKINIANA.

Three unpublished letters from Mr. Ruskin.

(These letters were addressed to Alderman George Baker, Joint Trustee of St. George's Guild, through whose courtesy we are enabled to reprint them here.)

Bramhall,
Coniseton, Lancashire.
Wednesday

Dear Mr Baker

I arrived at home
in all comfort, (and my
good little Joan with her
children the day after), and
now I must thank you
once more, in deliberation, for
all your kindness to me, and
express more distinctly than I
could in the necessity of
leaving, the most true pleasure
I had in meeting all the friends
you brought to me, - no less
than in the sympathy and

help which you gave me on
all subjects in which I was
interested.

Perhaps you may like to keep
the first scratch of the beginning
of next Feb, written in your
liver - at my bedroom
window, before breakfast
on the morning I left. I have
copied it - so that - in case
people ever ask you whether
I write 'easily' you will be
able at once to show them -
- very much the contrary

I am terribly pushed with
all areas of home work - and
cannot tell you half of what

I should like to - (besides what with these
scraps may say) - in the meantime accept
again my truest thanks, and believe me
with hearty regards to all your family -
Respectfully & affectionately Yours

A. Rusk

Geo. Baker. Esq.

I.

Brantwood,
Coniston, Lancashire,
Wednesday,
[July 18, 1877].

Dear Mr. Baker,

I arrived at home in all comfort (and my good little Joan with her children the day after) and now I must thank you once more, in deliberation, for all your kindness to me, and express more distinctly than I could in the nervousness of leaving, the most true pleasure I had in meeting all the friends you brought to me, —no less than in the sympathy and help which you gave me on all subjects in which I was interested.

Perhaps you may like to keep the first scratch of the beginning of next *Fors*, written in your house at my bedroom window, before breakfast on the morning I left. I have copied it—so that in case people ever ask you whether I write ‘easily’ you will be able at once to shew them—very much the contrary.

I am terribly pushed with all arrears of home work—and cannot tell you half of what I should like to (besides what little these scraps may say)—in the meantime accept again my truest thanks, and believe me with hearty regards to all your family.

Respectfully and affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin.

Geo. Baker, Esq.

Brantwood,

Coniston, Lancashire

29th Aug. '78.

Dear Mr Baker.

I am most grateful
to you for all things; most
chiefly of late for employing
Creswick, who has the truest
genius, though it will take
time to develop in the direction
of beauty. But Mr George
and you could not do greater
kindness than in fostering it.

Since my illness, I have
given up all hope of instituting
any modes of habitation or

St George's ground; and as
long as the present Master
lives, or is not deposed - or
does not resign, the Company
must be content with mere
Vegetarian successes, - for
all the land at my command
I shall keep under leaves.

I have just given orders that
Abbeydale shall be made
a vegetable and Botanic
garden - giving employment
to my workmen or workmen's
children who like to earn
a far - for an hour's exercise
- and furnishing model types

of vegetable produce to the Sheffield market.
 — which I am going to build good green houses,
 for keeps out frost. — but not unhealthily
 hot houses needing watching all night.

Whatever you have done, or propose doing,
 in this kind, at Beardsley, will be wholly
 delightful to me — and you may relieve
 your neighbour's dread of the threatened
colonization.

I am most thankful to hear of Graham's progress
 and good conduct, and am ever gratefully
 and affectionately yours, W.

II.

Brantwood,
Coniston, Lancashire,
29th Augt., '78.

Dear Mr. Baker,

I am most grateful to you for all things ; most chiefly of late for employing Creswick, who has the truest genius, though it will take time to develop in the direction of beauty. But St. George and you could not do greater kindness than in fostering it.

Since my illness I have given up all hope of instituting any modes of habitation on St. George's ground ; and as long as the present Master lives, or is not deposed, or does not resign, the Company must be content with merely Vegetarian successes—for all the land at my command I shall keep under leaves. I have just given orders that Abbeydale shall be made a vegetable and botanic garden, giving employment to any workmen or workmen's children who like to come so far for an hour's exercise—and furnishing model types of vegetable produce to the Sheffield markets—which I am going to build good greenhouses for keeping out frost—but not unhealthy hothouses needing watching all night.

Whatever you have done, or propose doing, in this kind, at Bewdley, will be wholly delightful to me—and you may relieve your neighbour's dread of the threatened colonization.

I am most thankful to hear of Graham's progress and good conduct, and am ever gratefully and affectionately yours,

J. R.

Brantwood.

Counston, Lancashire

Dear Mr Baker

I am deeply grateful
for all you have done. because
I am sure it is in great
part of kindness to me
personally. - but I trust
also that you and my other
friends feel it is not for me
that you are really working.
- Nor have I the least
satisfaction in anything that
depends on me. I want
people to see that 2 or 2
make four - whether I
advise them of that fact or not.
As for lawyers 'advice'

I have done with it.
The Guild must now
stand on its own feet.

I cannot - and would
not if I could. - have
anything more to do
with lawyers. Whatever
course of it - I will
be plagued with them
no more. I should be
dead in six months if
were possible.

Ever affectionately Yours
W. R. R. R.

III.

Brantwood,
Coniston, Lancashire.
[Undated, probably 1877.]


Dear Mr. Baker,

I am deeply grateful for all you have done, because I am sure it is in great part of kindness to me personally—but I trust also that you and my other friends feel that it is not for *me* that you are really working—nor have I the least satisfaction in anything that depends on *me*. I want people to see that 2 and 2 make four—whether *I* advise them of that fact or not.

As for lawyers' 'advice' *I* have done with it. The Guild must now stand on its own feet. *I* cannot—and would not if I could—have anything more to do with lawyers. Whatever come of it I will be plagued with them no more. I should be dead in six months of mere passion.

Ever affectionately yours,
J. Ruskin.

“BLACKWOOD” v. RUSKIN.

INCE Mr. Ruskin's death most periodical publications have printed articles upon his life and work. These have naturally been very divergent in character, and in the view they took as to Mr. Ruskin's place as a great teacher, but we believe that most of them have been written in a sincere spirit and with a genuine respect for the great personality so lately withdrawn; and many of the most critical are of real value and interest. In only one instance of importance has there been shewn a disregard not only of the most elementary courtesies of literature but also of even the semblance of truth. We refer, of course, to the article on Mr. Ruskin which appeared in the March issue of *Blackwood's Magazine*. By the irony of fate the same number contains an article entitled: "The Evolution of Literary Decency." That evolution is not yet complete in the case of Blackwood, for we have never read in any respectable journal a more grossly offensive and indecent article. By its publication Blackwood has maintained its own traditions. We do not forget its record in the past, nor the remark of that brave and gifted woman, Mrs. Oliphant,—herself the biographer of the house of Blackwood—who, referring to a similar article, wrote that "it was an attack which can only arouse our astonishment and dismay that the hand of a gentleman could have produced it, not to speak of a critic."

We do not here propose to follow Blackwood far through its many misstatements in detail. A very brief examination of the article will shew its bias and its worthlessness: its bad taste, which approaches, if it does not actually cross, the border line to scurrility, will be apparent to all. We can perhaps best attain our object by examining in the light of Mr. Ruskin's own words, some of Blackwood's statements.

Let us first deal with Blackwood's charge that Mr. Ruskin judges

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art by preposterous standards. To prove this he instances Mr. Ruskin's comparison of a classical and a mediæval representation of the griffin, and proceeds thus :

"Mr. Ruskin, it need hardly be said, charges strongly in favour of the mediæval beast, for a variety of the most amazing reasons ; and he clinches his argument, if so it can be called (tirade would be the better word), by observing that the classical, or false, griffin is 'a profound expression of the most passionate symbolism.' Here follow some eloquent and incomprehensible sentences about Ezekiel, and the faithful and true imagination, and the unity of the divine and human natures."

Now if we turn to the passage in *Modern Painters** in which Mr. Ruskin deals with these griffins we shall find that Blackwood has represented his arguments in such a garbled manner as to give an entirely false impression, and we invite our readers to satisfy themselves on this point by reading the passage carefully. They will then see that the essential difference between the two griffins is that whereas the Lombard workman "did really see a griffin in his imagination, and carved it from the life, meaning to declare to all ages that he had verily seen with his immortal eye such a griffin as that, the classical workman never saw a griffin at all, nor anything else ; but put the whole thing together by line and rule."

Mr. Ruskin proves this statement in six pages of clear reasoning, which space alone prevents our reproducing ; shewing point by point wherein the superiority of the mediæval griffin to the classical one lies, a superiority which any intelligent reader can verify for himself by a reference to the drawing of the two griffins, which accompanies Mr. Ruskin's remarks.

A similar examination of the other statements made by Blackwood reveals their untruth. Sentences are stripped from their context and given as Mr. Ruskin's full and final views. Thus we learn that he described the sublime art of Raphael as a tasteless poison. The statement, wherever made, would be strictly limited in its application. We open *Modern Painters* almost at random and find

* Volume III, Chapter viii (Page 109 in small edition).

BLACKWOOD v. RUSKIN.

Mr. Ruskin speaking of "the precious and pure passages of intense feeling and heavenly light, holy and undefiled, and glorious with the changeless passion of eternity, which sanctify with their shadeless peace the deep and noble conceptions of the early school of Italy," and mentioning in this connection the name of Raphael with those of two others.

But after all we feel that to answer an article like Blackwood's is waste of time. A writer who refers to Mr. Ruskin as one whose motto is "D—n anything that's low,"* who hints that his aims were selfish and ignoble, but wrapped "in the cloak of a generous and imposing vocabulary," who suggests that his intellect was disordered, who uses towards him every unworthy epithet that he can think of—such a writer stands condemned already. We can only take leave of him, as Mr. Ruskin did many years ago, with the respect due to hopeless, helpless imbecility.

* Blackwood's critic is inconsistent in his scurrility, as in all else, for later in the same article we are asked never to forget that Mr. Ruskin was *echt bürger* and that "with the characteristic jealousy of the bourgeois . . . he singles out the landed interest for peculiarly ferocious attack."

JOY IN WORK.

YESTERDAY it rained with glee ;
To-day the sun shines cheerily ;
Growing hard, each blade of wheat
Revels in the wet and heat.

Robin builds and will not rest,
Fascinated by her nest ;
Down their narrow well-worn road
Eager ants bear load on load.

Those whom Nature doth employ
Hail each new day's work with joy.
Strange indeed that we must ask
Why man alone should hate his task.

Should the bird and ant detest
Each his proper hill and nest,—
Should the corn despise the soil,
Then man might well dislike to toil ;

But as it is, while these obey
Nature in their work and play,
All contented with their lot,
Who will say why man is not ?

In her workshop Nature stands
Busy with her artist hands,
Shaping for her own delight
Things that ravish sense and sight.

JOY IN WORK.

Forth they go, her children all,
And their happy looks recall
As they deck the tasteful earth
How love and joy beset their birth.

We must stamp that trade-mark too
On each bit of work we do,
And love of all that we create
Supplant the drudgery of hate.

Use in beauty, joy in work,
Pride that will not stoop to shirk,
Conscience that sustains the pride,—
These let us scatter far and wide.—

Then at last in fellowship
We may forget the master's whip,
And join with ant and bird and corn
In hailing every work-day morn.

Ernest H. Crosby.

New York.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, WORDSWORTH AND POETIC THEORY.

To the Editor of *Saint George*.

Dear Sir,

In the January issue of *Saint George* I was so ill-advised in my notice of Professor Saintsbury's *Matthew Arnold* as to venture upon that very delicate and dangerous ground—poetic theory—and have, in consequence, incurred the reprobation of Mr. J. A. Dale. As however the differences between us are, I think, more apparent than real, will you allow me to explain my position?

I. My contention is that you cannot have poetry of a high order, unless the subject is a lofty one. Professor Saintsbury's argument is "specious" because Matthew Arnold dealt in his Essay not with the source of poetical pleasure, but with the essential qualities of great poetry. It would be easy to name scores of poems which afford poetical pleasure, but which cannot be considered great poems, because although the execution is perfect, the subject is not at the required height. The pretty pastoral poems of William Shenstone occur to me as forcible examples. The sweetly sad despair of Corydon at the cold indifference of his beloved Phyllis, and the background of groves and fountains and pastures, are charming and perfect enough in their way, but they have not the essential quality of great poems. Mr. Dale may retort that Shenstone was not a great poet and could never under any circumstances have produced a great poem. But I contend that even a great poet could not with such a theme have produced a great poem; while a poet of an inferior order, moved by some powerful impulse or deep-felt truth, may produce a masterpiece. Beauty of style is not only secondary to, but in a large measure dependent upon the choice of subject, and is always in the ascending scale as the dignity of the theme rises. Lofty ideas

inevitably express themselves in lofty language, and with a certain musical cadence.

2. I referred to Wordsworth because I thought that he verified this truth in a remarkable degree, and here again I find Mr. Dale at variance with myself. He asserts that Wordsworth chose commonplace subjects by nature and design, and in support of his assertion quotes Coleridge's words with regard to Wordsworth that he had "above all the original gift of spreading the tone, the atmosphere, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world, round forms, incidents, and situations of which for the common view, custom had dimmed all the lustre, had dried up all the sparkle and the dewdrops." This of course is beautifully true, but is not choosing the commonplace, but that which the common view had rendered commonplace. There is I think a distinction between common and commonplace. There are things which are as common as the air we breathe, but are never commonplace, because in them lies that element of wonder which the commonplace has not. The song of the lark, the delicate and iridescent plumage of the butterfly, the myriad pearls of dew on leaf and shrub and flower, the rising and setting of the sun and the happy laughter of little children are familiar indeed, but never commonplace, except to those who "have eyes and see not." To Wordsworth they were an eternal miracle, and even in the humblest and meanest things, he saw beauty and dignity. But too often he dealt with themes which even his fine intuition and imaginative treatment could not invest with beauty, and which were in their essence commonplace. In *The Prelude* for instance, which Macaulay stated to be unreadable, we find the deadly dull narration of incidents which have no business in a poem at all, where the matter is prosy, and the language dull and insipid; and in the same poem when the subject is at the required height, we find some of the loftiest and most beautiful passages in English poetry, as in those dealing with the influence of the lakes and mountains on the childish imagination, particularly those incomparable lines beginning

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"There was a boy, ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander."

3. Mr. Dale misunderstood me if he thought I condemned Arnold's ideal "to see life steadily and see it whole." What I meant was that this was rather the characteristic of the philosopher than of the poet, and that a poet has rather an insight into a part of life, than breadth of vision over all life. It is surely a commonplace in poetry as in all art and all knowledge, that range and intensity rarely go together. The attitude of the true poet in his sublimest utterances is often like that of the child whose outlook is very limited, yet who with unerring wisdom sees into the very depth of things. Does Mr. Dale mean that a man cannot be a great poet unless he sees life steadily and sees it whole? If so he will have to exclude from the list of great poets such names as Byron, Shelley and Keats, who are each characterised by depth of insight and intensity of feeling rather than by range of vision.

I dare not venture now upon the vexed question of poetic definition. When I said that there was little fault to find with Arnold's definition amended by Professor Saintsbury to "a passionate interpretation of life," I meant that it was true so far as it went, for it is of course not a complete definition. The task of finding that complete and satisfactory definition I shall leave to the riper scholarship of Mr. Dale, contenting myself with the fact that to me poetry is "the breath of life."

Yours faithfully,
Your Reviewer.

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On The Old Road. By John Ruskin. 3 vols., 5/- each. London: George Allen, 1899.

THESE three volumes, which are now re-issued in a cheaper form, contain the miscellaneous essays and articles, which Mr. Ruskin published between 1834-1885. The collection together of these, which were previously scattered, and in many cases inaccessible to the general reader, is a matter for gratitude. The articles are all of very great value, and will assist the student of Ruskin in the proper understanding of his teaching on many subjects.

The range of subjects which Mr. Ruskin covers in his writings has long been the subject of wonderment and admiration. Something of that range can be realized by the most hasty glance at these books. The first two volumes deal mainly with Art subjects, the third with Literature, Economy, Theology, etc. The Art section includes chapters dealing with Pre-Raphaelitism, Architecture, Picture Galleries, Natural Science, and a host of other subjects. The introductory chapter, entitled "My First Editor," which was originally contributed to the *University Magazine* in 1878, is of great autobiographical interest. He contrasts the literary conditions prevailing when as a mere youth he commenced his contributions to the annual "Friendship's Offering" with those of modern years:

"Faith in the usually accepted principles of propriety, and confidence in the Funds, the Queen, the English Church, the British Army, and the perennial continuance of England, of her Annuals, and of the creation in general, were necessary then for the eligibility, and important elements in the success, of the winter-blowing author. Whereas I suppose that the popularity of our present candidates for praise, at the successive changes of the moon, may be considered as almost proportionate to their confidence in the abstract principles of dissolution,

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the immediate necessity of change, and the inconvenience, no less than the iniquity, of attributing any authority to the Church, the Queen, the Almighty, or anything else but the British Press."

As to the last reference we wonder what Mr. Ruskin would have said had he been writing when a certain half-penny morning newspaper appeared and took in hand the guidance of the British Empire, and the interpretation of the Divine Will!

Our readers will find in the second volume of *On the Old Road* the protest which Mr. Ruskin issued in 1876 against the extension of the railways in the Lake district. Probably on no other subject have Mr. Ruskin's views been so persistently distorted, and we therefore commend this article to the special attention of our readers. Although somewhat lengthy we cannot resist giving its most effective conclusion in full.

"I have said I take no selfish interest in this resistance to the railroad. But I do take an unselfish one. It is precisely because I wish to improve the minds of the populace, and because I am spending my own mind, strength, and fortune, wholly on that subject, that I don't want to let them see Helvellyn while they are drunk. I suppose few men now living have so earnestly felt—none certainly have so earnestly declared—that the beauty of Nature is the blesseddest and most necessary of lessons for men; and that all other efforts in education are futile till you have taught your people to love fields, birds, and flowers. Come then, my benevolent friends, join with me in that teaching. I have been at it all my life, and without pride, do solemnly assure you that I know how it is to be managed. I cannot indeed tell you, in this short preface, how, completely, to fulfil so glorious a task. But I can tell you clearly, instantly, and emphatically, in what temper you must set about it. Here are you, a Christian, a gentleman, a trained scholar; there is your subject of education, a Godless clown, in hapless ignorance. You can present no more blessed offering to God than that human creature, raised into faith, gentleness, and the knowledge of the works of his Lord. But observe this—you must not hope to make so noble an offering to God of that which doth cost you nothing. You must be resolved to labour, and to lose, yourself, before you can rescue this overlaboured lost sheep, and offer it alive to its Master. If then, my benevolent friend, you are prepared to take out your two pence, and to give them to the hosts here in Cumberland, saying, 'Take care of

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him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, I will repay thee when I come to Cumberland myself,' on these terms, oh my benevolent friends, I am with you, hand and glove, in every effort you wish to make for the enlightenment of poor men's eyes. But if your motive is, on the contrary, to put two pence into your own purse, stolen between the Jerusalem and Jericho of Keswick and Ambleside, out of the poor drunken traveller's pocket; if your real object, in your charitable offering, is, not even to lend unto the Lord by giving to the poor, but to lend unto the Lord by making a dividend out of the poor; then, my pious friends, enthusiastic Ananias, pitiful Judas, and sanctified Korah, I will do my best, in God's name, to stay your hands and stop your tongues."

The third volume contains amongst other articles of extreme interest, five upon "Fiction—Fair and Foul" reprinted from the *Nineteenth Century*. These deal in the main with Scott, Byron, and Wordsworth, and they shew very vividly the marvellous power of subtle and minute analysis which the writer possessed. Ruskin's love for Sir Walter Scott is well known. He rarely wrote or spoke without frequent references to him, and nearly always had something new to say, some fresh interpretation of the novelist's genius. In "Fiction—Fair and Foul," Mr. Ruskin is seen almost at his best, and the most diligent student of Scott will find here many new thoughts on a subject which he may have considered he was master of. Space prevents illustration by quotation, and in closing our notice of these worthy books, we invite our readers to carefully consider the brief article in the third volume entitled "Home, and its Economies," which contains the following exposition of patriotism, and merits special attention to day, when all nations sing of war.

"No writer of authority ever speaks of a nation as having felt, or acted, patriotically. Patriotism is, by definition, a virtue of individuals; and so far from being in those individuals a mode of egoism, it is precisely in the sacrifice of their egoism that it consists. It is the temper of mind which determines them to defer their own interests to those of their country.

"Supposing it possible for any parallel sentiment to animate a nation as one body, it could have reference only to the position it held among

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other families of the world. The name of the emotion would then be properly "Cosmism," and would signify the resolution of such a people to sacrifice its own special interests to those of mankind."

Donatello. By Hope Rea. 5/-. London: George Bell & Sons, 1900.



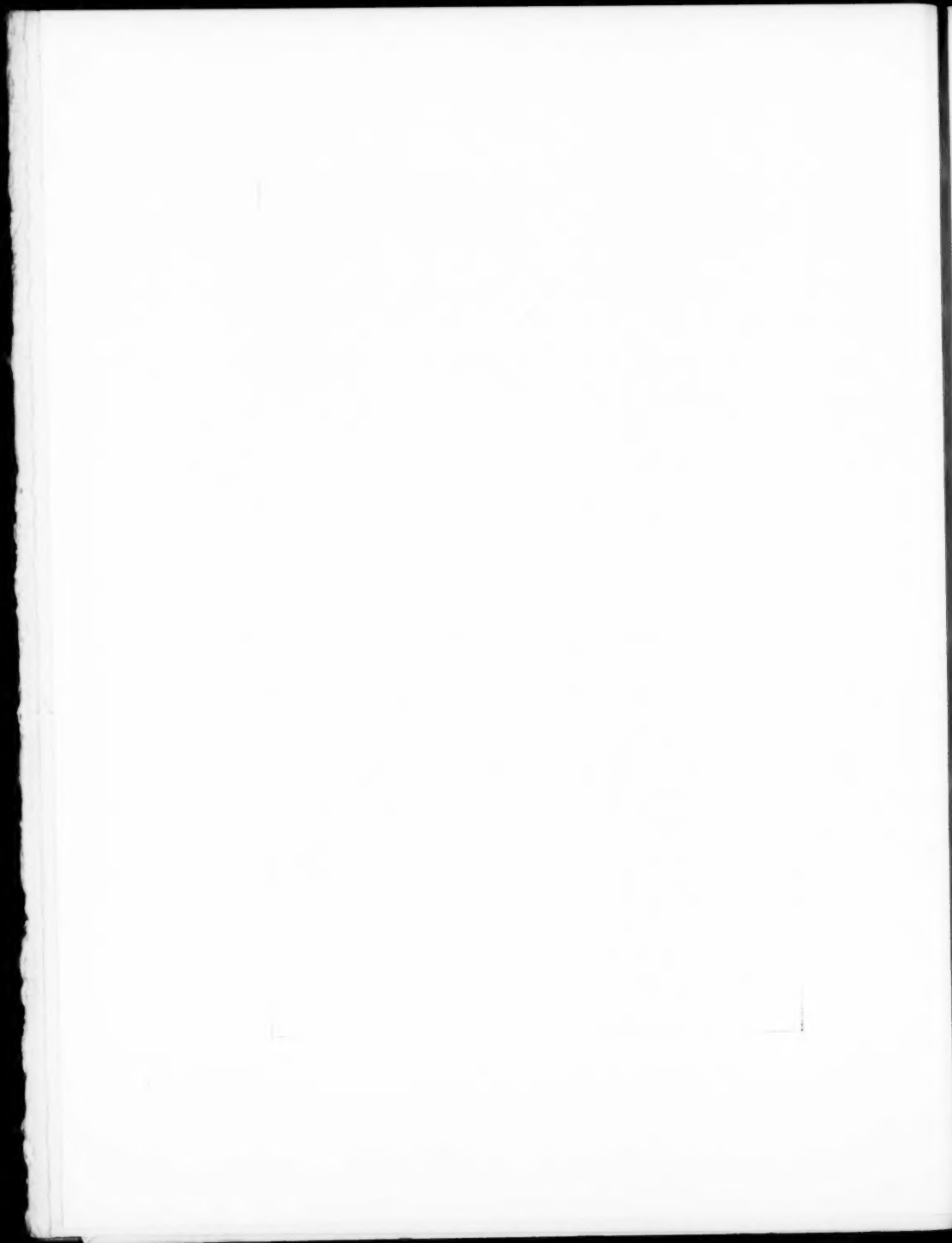
MR. Hope Rea could scarcely have had a more inspiring subject to write of than Donatello. In his preface, and elsewhere, he very properly calls attention to the modern neglect of Donatello. The case was different in the sculptor's own day. His supreme genius then received the recognition which has been denied by later ages. Donatello was born in Florence in 1386, dying in the same city in 1466, at the age of eighty years. Of his personal life very little indeed is known, and much of that little is conjecture. What is known is told by Mr. Rea who is indebted for many of his details to old Vasari. He very wisely commences his account with some account of the social and intellectual conditions of the Florence into which Donatello was born, and which was to be the chief scene of his labours. Such an account was indispensable to the proper understanding of the forces which played upon the great artist's life and influenced the development of his genius,

Mr. Rea writes throughout with enthusiasm of Donatello's work, but he never allows it to lead him into exaggeration or untruth. In his last chapter entitled, "Donatello's Place and Influence," he compares him with his contemporaries who "valued beauty of line and form for its own sake."

"In Donatello we find a different aim. Form was with him only a means to an end, being the expression of some ideal conception, generally heroic in quality. Thus beauty of form is with him never essential; it may or may not be present; his genius was to pass beyond



— GATTAMELATA MONUMENT, PADUA. —
BY DONATELLO.



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the mere form, and, grasping the spirit, bring it to the surface. . . .
Donatello, of all sculptors of the Renaissance, is the master of conveying spiritual suggestion by means of his art. One only of his successors is worthy to be named with him; one only was in any fashion truly his follower, and he was Michel Angelo."

If we were to criticise Mr. Rea's book at all, it would be that he does not pay sufficient attention to Donatello's work as the interpreter of childhood. Certainly here he was without a rival. His youthful S. John, his Singing Boys, and his Madonna and Child, give us, as only the hand of a supreme master could, the indescribable beauty of youth. He knew, if ever artist did, that

"The child is, was, and still shall be
The world's deliverer; in his heart the springs
Of our salvation ever rise, and we
Mount on his innocence as on wings."

The Life of John Ruskin. By W. G. Collingwood. 6/-. London: Methuen & Co., 1900.



It is well known Mr. Collingwood is the author of "The Life and Work of John Ruskin" which appeared in two volumes in the year 1893. The present issue is not a reprint of that work, but, as the author tells us in his prefatory note, the whole has been re-written. Expositions of Mr. Ruskin's teaching which were no longer necessary have been omitted, but new biographical details are printed, and the story is now brought down to its close. The main plan of the book of course, remains the same. The story of the life is told with clearness, and with much literary charm.

But for our own part we have never regarded Mr. Collingwood's as the final Life of Ruskin. We do not mean that he is not the proper man for the task. Far from it; we know no man better

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qualified. What we mean, and what Mr. Collingwood knows as well as anyone, is that the story of the Master's personal life has never yet been told in any true sense. We believe that there are no adequate reasons for withholding the story, and we believe that simple justice demands its telling. Sure we are that whenever the world has before it the full record of Mr. Ruskin's private life, it will reverence the knightly chivalry he ever displayed, and it will read with something approaching to awe of his extraordinary heroism in maintaining silence under circumstances almost without a parallel in literary history.

In the work under notice, one naturally turns to the last chapters to read, with authority, of the last scenes in the great life.

"On Saturday morning, the 20th, all appeared to be going well until about half past ten. Suddenly he collapsed and became unconscious. It was the dreaded failure of the heart after influenza. His breathing weakened, and through the morning and through the afternoon in that historic little room, lined with his Turners, he lay, falling softly asleep. No efforts could revive him. There was no struggle, there were no words. The bitterness of death was spared him. And when it was all over, and those who had watched through the day turned at last from his bedside, 'sunset and evening star' shone bright above the heavenly lake and the clear-cut blue of Coniston fells.

"But sweet as his setting out was for him, we were a sad little group in the twilight below. How marble-calm and dear the face was when I lifted the covering; how unbelievable that the great heart was still. Was it this I had feared, this lovely death, serenely arriving? Of all the thoughts that might—one remembers—have crowded to mind around Ruskin's death-bed, one only shaped itself into words, again and again repeating 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.'

"Whilst we still talked in whispers round the fire the news was abroad. It could not have been wholly unexpected, but it came as a shock to many a reader of the Saturday evening paper, who was hoping or fearing far different tidings of death or victory at the war; and even such great events for many, seemed to stand still when they knew that we had lost the last of the great old men.

"Next morning brought messages of hurried condolence, and the Monday such a chorus from the press as made all the praises of his

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life-time seem trifling and all its blame forgotten. If only, in his years of struggle and despair, he had known the place he should win!

"On Tuesday came a telegram offering a grave in Westminster Abbey, the highest honour our nation can give to its dead. But his own mind had long since been made plain on that point, and his wishes had not been forgotten. 'If I die here,' he used to say, 'bury me at Coniston.' 'I should have liked, if it happened at Herne Hill, to lie with my father and mother in Shirley Churchyard, as I should have wished, if I died among the Alps, to be buried in the snow.' And indeed to send Ruskin's dead body by rail, and drag it through London streets to a grave, however honourable, among strangers, would have been, to all who love him and his teaching, little short of mockery.

"Another desire, strongly expressed, was for a cast of his face and hand, as, no doubt, has been not unusual when great men have died. But I remember too well his anger, at Lucca years ago, with an Italian who had dared so to profane a face he loved. Mr. Ruskin had asked at a shop whether they sold a cast of the effigy of Ilaria di Caretto, and was told No. Next morning, going into the church, we found the dead lady's face—he always thought of that wonderful sculpture as the dead lady, and not mere lifeless marble—we found it wet and fouled, and knew what had been done. When the man came with the ghastly white mask, triumphant in anticipation of the signor's gratitude, there was such a storm as few people would have anticipated or understood.* Such being his feelings, who would dare to outrage them on his own person?"

Mr. Collingwood closes his tribute in these touching words.

"It is his birthday once more. We have just been to take the children's posy of the year's first flowers, no longer to set on his table, but to hide in his tomb.

"It is a glorious day of frost and sun-bluest of skies, brightest of mountain tops, with those noble brows of russet and purple crag overlooking the churchyard's golden green.

"All the wreaths lie still there, withering away, forlorn tributes of affection. But there are whiter wreaths on the grave than any we laid—garlands of snow, unsullied, from Heaven."

* But surely the enquiry on Mr. Ruskin's part implied that he thought it probable a cast had been already taken, and that he was willing to buy it? (Editor *Saint George*.)

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Præterita. By John Ruskin. Vol. 3. 5s. net. London: George Allen, 1899.



HIS volume of *Præterita*—the last that was written—possesses a pathetic interest in view of the conditions under which it was written, as described by Mr. Collingwood in Chapter X of his “Life.”

“In the summer of 1889, at Seascale, on the Cumberland coast, Mr. Ruskin was still busy on *Præterita*. He had his task planned out to the finish; in nine more chapters he meant to conclude his third volume with a review of the leading memories of his life, down to the year 1875, when the story was to close. Passages here and there were written, material collected from old letters and journals, and the contents and titles of the chapters arranged; but the intervals of strength had become fewer and shorter, and at last, in spite of all his courage and energy, he was brought face to face with the fact that his powers were ebbing away, and that head and hand could do their work no more.

“In his bedroom at Seascale, morning after morning, he still worked, or tried to work, as he had been used to do on journeys further afield in brighter days. But now he seemed lost among the papers scattered on his table; he could not fix his mind upon them, and turned from one subject to another in despair; and yet patient, and kindly to those with him whose help he could no longer use, and who dared not show—though he could not but guess—how heart-breaking it was.”

Præterita was therefore never finished. The present volume deals with the years 1850 to 1864, but only in a very fragmentary manner. It is no sense a connected narrative; certain episodes are dealt with, and the story of several of his friendships is told; that is all. But there is a charm in every line which it is almost impossible to describe, and which is due to the personality of the writer. Chapter III “L’esterelle” is intensely pathetic especially if read between the lines. The story of Rosie is partly told in this chapter. “Some wise, and prettily mannered, people” he writes “have told me I shouldn’t say anything about Rosie at all. But

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I am too old now to take advice, and I won't have this following letter—the first she ever wrote me—moulder away, when I can read it no more, lost to all loving hearts." It is indeed a charming letter, unaffected and joyous, and it is easy to understand his regard for the writer. Such passages as these in Mr. Ruskin's life are a great temptation to speculate on the what-might-have-been, and there is no more profitless occupation.

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COSME COLONY, As we go to press we have received *Cosme Monthly*, PARAGUAY, dated April, 1900. This is the small monthly paper issued from the Colony which was established in Paraguay about six years ago. The record of the progress of this experiment is of extreme interest and will, we believe, command the sympathetic interest of our readers. We are therefore glad of the opportunity of reprinting the following passage from the issue referred to. It is exceedingly well written and gives a good general idea of the progress and aims of the Colony. We hope to notice in these columns, from time to time, the doings of the Colony, the members of which we still think (notwithstanding the opening sentences of the following extract) are entitled to rank as heroes.

"From letters occasionally received and newspaper notices sometimes seen, it appears that Cosme folk are regarded by some few people as heroes who in their noble fight for a suffering humanity have left the pleasures and vanities of civilisation to cheerfully undergo the perils and privations of pioneering—and all for the Cause. We must respectfully decline the position and beseech these admirers to remove us from the pedestals on which their imagination has exalted us. Had we been born in the purple there might have been some reason in the idea, for verily there is something heroic in the self-sacrifice that lays aside the luxury and ease of wealth to share the cares and burdens of poverty. But Cosme folk are cottage born, homely fed, scantily schooled and early worked. Our part in the splendours of Nineteenth Centuryism consisted of the usual worker's share—the building of palaces and living in tenements, the weaving of silk and wearing of fustian, and the weary soul-destroying strife of the open labour market, on whose crowded slippery floor the weak are trampled in the brutal struggle for a living.

"The splendid isolation of the individual worker did not appeal to us. True, our school books had told us of the wondrous advantages of living in this marvellous age; how good was the government that provided policemen and soldiers to guard us from burglars and foreigners, how benevolent the capitalist who found us work, how kind the clergyman who taught us how to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters, and how noble the inventor who made labour so productive. We read how thankful we should be that we were born in a

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civilised country, and that our lot did not happen to be cast in England of the olden days, when children had to waste their time in play because there were few schools and no factories, when the land was tealess and sugarless, and there were neither steamships nor railways, and poor folk had no glass in their windows.

"But somehow the ethics of the school books did not wear very well in after life. The policeman we found to be rather a nuisance, for we had no property to guard and he always kept us "moving on." The blood tax of soldiery was paid by us. The capitalist was benevolent only to himself. The Christianity of the clergyman partook little of the nature of Christ. And the machinery which was the light of the age, only degraded our toil and robbed us of our brains. In short it seemed to us that the price we were paying for our shoddy food, shoddy clothes, shoddy houses, shoddy amusements and shoddy lives was altogether out of proportion for the benefits received. We of course took our share in the agitations of the day. We were in good standing in the Union books, subscribed to a Labour paper and in some cases had a five thousandth share in a talker in the national talking house. Yet through it all we had to keep on elbowing our way in the labour market, to trample or be trampled, had to feel the degradation of servitude steal into our souls threatening to stifle there our longings for healthy living.

"Far be it from us to belittle in any way those who play manly part in the fight for the uplifting of the fallen and the straightening of the crookednesses of social life. Heroes truly are they who fearlessly devote their lives to the Cause, regardless of self, shrinking not from danger and being rewarded only by broken hearts and their own knowledge of right-doing.

"But Cosme folk were not thus fashioned. Horny handed rather than silver tongued, readier with axe than pen, brawny muscled rather than keen of wit, what was there for us did we remain in the labour market, but to keep on the same old trampling of others, till, struck down by sickness or age, we ourselves had to go under. Knowing that in Brotherhood only lay the salvation of humanity, it became borne in on us that we were false to our manhood and were naught but cowards did we not refuse to take further part in the criminal and foolish struggling with our fellows. So we washed from our feet the blood of the labour market wherein we had striven; abandoned the fight for "One man one vote," "Old Age Pensions," and other political poulitices that were preparing for application to the social cancer, and left our masters and our wagework, the tools that we dropped being eagerly seized by anxious toil-seekers. And we left the huge heaven-hiding

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houses and the factories that had bounded our lives, stunted our bodies and paled our children's faces. And some of us came up from the mines and others from their homeless wanderings on Australian plains. And the labour world closed up after us like the sea after a dipped out bucket. And we gathered together in the wilderness with our wives and our little ones to school ourselves in brotherhood.

"Were it not that folk who do not understand, talk so much of the privations and hardships we have undergone, it would hardly be worth while to say much about them. We have lacked and do still lack many things which people of our own class of life consider as necessities. That we have done without them for so long and are still alive and healthy shows that they were not necessities for us. We get along without wheaten flour, tea or butter; and with very little milk and meat. Our wardrobes in material, quantity and style are mainly regulated by the needs of decency and the depth of our purse, and not by the extent of our fancy or ideas of comfort. Work in new and sub-tropical country is of necessity both hard and trying, and most of us have felt somewhat the constant pressure of work never overtaken. Housing so far has been of a rough and makeshift nature, the genial climate however making endurable here what could with difficulty have been borne in other parts of the world. We draw water from wells instead of taps; have poor kerosene lamps instead of gas or electric light; chop wood for our fires instead of shovelling coal; use clay-built ovens instead of iron cooking ranges. Our roads are muddy in wet weather, dusty in dry, and we have no side walks yet. Starting with very little capital, the strictest economy has had to be practised in living, all funds possibly spareable going to increase the means of production. The women have lost the pleasures of shopping. There are no funds available for pocket-money. The thousand and one little conveniences of town life have to be foregone. Theatres, picture galleries, museums, and all the showy evidences of art and culture are missing.

"These inconveniences are by no means the exclusive property of pioneering communists. They are held in common by all who take up life on the fringe of civilisation. These and far greater are the trials of individual pioneers in the backblocks of British colonies.

"The changing of life habits, the ever present needs of self-restraint, the new-grooving of thought, the necessity for the constant exercise of charity to others in thought, word and deed,—these are the real trials of Cosme living. The unsocial training which from our youth up we have all undergone has made us selfish and suspicious, thoughtless of the good of others, careful for our own good. And it would indeed be

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foolish to expect that the knowing of our weaknesses, and the having the desire to live justly and peaceably would be sufficient to make a clean sweep from our hearts and lives of all these anti-social habits and tendencies. Personal disagreements, personal mis-judgments, personal uncharities are more irritating and disturbing in small than in large communities, among social than unsocial people. And it is this that makes the qualities of self-restraint and real heart-charity so necessary for the permanent well-being of a community. We however must fain be content with the knowledge that the weakness is known and striven against; and that, though we all of us at times fall from grace, yet there is a steady and general effort making in the right direction, so that by steadfast trying, we may in time or our children after us, 'Beat down Satan under our feet.'"

"TENNYSON—
REMINISCENCE
AND HOMAGE."

We have pleasure in printing the following brief abstract of the lecture on Tennyson which was delivered before the Society by Miss E. R. Chapman on February 28, 1900. We refrain from printing the lecture in full as its publication in book form is contemplated.

Miss Chapman opened her address by proclaiming herself an idealist, and proceeded to compare the realist theory of art with that of the great idealist writers, whether in prose or verse, of the past. The highest aim of these writers, she pointed out, has *not* been that of the most conspicuous exponent of realism in his country—to

"Draw the Thing as he sees it for the God of Things as they are,"

but rather to draw the Thing as they *divine* it for the God of Things as they are *becoming*—of Things as they will be. Their mission has been to penetrate to the heart of things—to divine the true purport, the latent significance of the phenomena which the realist considers but superficially, seeing, as it were, but the outside, and failing to distinguish between what is of real import and what is merely transitory and on the surface. After a generation or so

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of this travesty, this falsification of art, we turn with ever-increasing delight to poets like Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson, or to "such lofty idealist thinkers as for instance Emerson . . . or him whose name must be spoken here and now as one breathes a name beloved and honoured in the chamber of death—John Ruskin." Miss Chapman had ventured to choose for her theme perhaps the foremost idealist of his day, Tennyson, one too, as to whom so much had been said and written, only because, circumstances having brought her into personal contact with him, she was able to make a small personal contribution to the sum of knowledge concerning him. She should make no apology for being frankly egotistic, as without a certain amount of what might seem like egotism, she could not hope to interest her hearers even a little. She then gave in some detail the history of her acquaintance with Tennyson, which commenced with correspondence respecting her Analysis of "In Memoriam," and led to her feelings of veneration and affection for the great poet being redoubled by what she was privileged to see of the great man—the great, simple, childlike, human man. The impression left on her mind after the first day in his company at Aldworth was threefold—his humour, his kindness and his simplicity striking her almost equally. For the prominence of one of these characteristics, humour, she had not been quite prepared, her impression in regard to it tallying with that of Mr. Lecky, as quoted in the Memoir. Mr. Lecky wrote that it had been a surprise to him to find that the poet "possessed a strong sense of humour, delighted in witty stories and told them admirably. This was a side to his nature which never, I think, appeared in his writings before 'The Northern Farmer.'" She had found him teeming with humour, and she had noticed that the more his friends possessed the better they "got on" with him, and the less likely they were to be jarred and alarmed by the eccentricities of manner which some found so formidable. His kindheartedness was unmistakeable, and his great hospitality and practical courtesy and consideration as a host had touched her profoundly.

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Had the venerable master of Aldworth been the veriest obscurity, had one not known him to be great, one would have left loving him just for his kindness. His transparent simplicity and child-like humility of character were absolutely phenomenal. Quoting the words of another friend, Mr. Watts-Dunton, the lecturer agreed that his charm lay in a great veracity of soul, "in a simple single-mindedness, so child-like, that unless you had known him to have been the undoubted author of poems as marvellous for exquisite art as for inspiration, you could not have supposed but that all subtleties—even those of poetic art—must be foreign to a nature so simple." He did not, as we most of us do in conversation, give our interlocutor half ourselves, the other half being engaged in speculating as to how far our companion will understand and sympathize with our drift, in withholding this remark for fear it should fall flat or watering down the other for fear it should offend. He was *himself* unreservedly, unconditionally in everything that he said, whether he was bandying jests with an intimate or discoursing solemnly on the secrets of nature or the deepest mysteries of being. *Dans tout homme de génie il y a un enfant*, said Balzac. The quality no doubt had its inconvenient and even regrettable side, as when the *enfant* became the *enfant terrible*, or when the habit of thinking aloud exposed those "little humours and grumpinesses" that are usually concealed or controlled. But it could be truly said of Tennyson as he said of another, that he was

"In his simplicity sublime,"

as the greatest only are. Some interesting notes of his conversation, taken at the time, were read. Both on the first day spent in his company and on subsequent occasions he discoursed on many subjects of profound interest, such as the ideals and responsibilities attaching to the poet's art; the different schools of poetry representing various tendencies, free-will, evolution, the mystery of "that Divine and Unseen who is always guiding us," etc. Among lighter themes, he touched on the vagaries of literary criticism, on

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the society papers and the growing tendency to personality and triviality in the modern press generally, on the prevalent mistake of attributing to writers not merely the opinions but the actual circumstances and history of the characters in their works, on the delight experienced by a certain school of critics in detecting what they supposed to be plagiarism or pouncing on any phrase that had been used before. "They will not allow one to say 'Ring the bell' without finding that we have taken it from Sir Philip Sidney." His reading of some of his own poems, notably the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," was a wonderful performance for a man of his age and his enjoyment of one of the poems in dialect, the humour of which he appeared to relish keenly himself, was delightful to witness. His remarks too on the manner in which poetry should be read aloud, were full of interest. Several instances were given of his love of fun and even of "chaff," a capacity to stand which he regarded as a merit of no mean order in his friends. No one could be much in his company without being reminded of his well-known love of nature and of his wonderful powers of observation. Whenever one strolled through his garden with him, he would point out his favourite trees and shrubs and flowers—the colour of this, the form of the other, the history of a third—with loving delight. The lecturer closed with the final scene in the Abbey when the English nation, delighting to do him honour, laid to rest her greatest Laureate, and perhaps her noblest, purest-hearted man. Many who were present, she supposed, must have felt, while his hymn "The Silent Voices" was being sung, something of what Mr. Watts-Dunton has beautifully expressed in the poem he has called by the same name. Pictures rose before his mind, he tells us, amid the mourning throng, to the strains of that music, of walks at Aldworth and Farringford in happy converse with the Master.

"And when the music ceased and pictures fled,
I walked as in a dream around the grave,
And looked adown and saw the flowers outspread ;

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And spirit voices spake from aisle and nave :—
 'To follow him be true, be pure, be brave:
 Thou needest not his lyre,' the voices said.

"Beyond the sun, beyond the farthest star,
 Shines still the land which poets still may win
 Whose poems are their lives—whose souls within
 Hold naught in dread save Art's high conscience bar—
 Who have for Muse a maiden free from scar—
 Who knows how beauty dies at touch of sin—
 Who love mankind, yet, having gods for kin,
 Breathe in Life's wood, zephyrs from climes afar."

SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS.

We have received the twenty-third annual report of this Society, which contains a most interesting record of the work which it has accomplished during the past year. The report is prefaced with the following reference to Mr. Ruskin.

"It seems but a little while since the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings had to lament the death of its most strenuous founder and advocate, William Morris. It has now sorrowfully to strike from its list of members the name of John Ruskin. His first serious writing, in 1837, was on *The Poetry of Architecture*. Twelve years later he published the *Seven Lamps*, and in that work set down for all time the principles which should govern the treatment of ancient buildings. In 1854 he wrote another passionate appeal on their behalf, and pleaded for the establishment of a Society to watch and guard them. "The restorations," he said, "have actually begun like cancers on every important piece of Gothic architecture in Christendom; the question is only how much can yet be saved. All projects, all pursuits, having reference to art, are at this moment of less importance than those which are simply protective." In the remaining years of a long life Ruskin's voice was raised again and again to denounce this craze for "restoration," and when he found that his words were but little heeded, he trained artists and spent time and fortune on the making of faithful records of threatened buildings. These may now be seen at Sheffield and elsewhere. His last public act was in connection with the memorial

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raised by the Society in 1897 against the rebuilding of part of the west front of Peterborough Cathedral, which he had drawn as a boy. To this memorial he added a pathetic signature, traced with evident difficulty by a hand that had lost its cunning. As this will be of interest to many of our members it is here reproduced.

**"DO NOT LET US TALK THEN OF RESTORATION,
THE THING IS A LIE FROM BEGINNING TO END.**

"John Ruskin."